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The Alexandrian Style at Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome

BY
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FIG. 2—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA, PALIMPSEST WALL OF SANCTUARY: CROWNED MADONNA AND ANGEL, EARLIEST LAYER; ANNUNCIATION, SECOND LAYER; CHURCH FATHER, LAYER ASCRIBED TO JOHN VII

The Alexandrian Style at Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome

By MYRTILLA AVERY

Amidst the wreckage of the frescoes in the ancient church of S. Maria Antiqua there appears an angel's head of such surprising beauty that even the jaded summer tourist has been observed to pause before it (Fig. 1). To archaeologists the head has been a problem ever since it was brought to light in the excavations of the Forum in 1900; for its Hellenistic qualities are so pronounced and are rendered with such understanding and skill that it insistently calls to mind not late classic work but Pompeian heads like that of Aphrodite in the Punishment of Eros now in the Naples Museum (Fig. 3). The lower part of a head (Fig. 2) facing the angel identified the subject as the Annunciation, and although this fragment lacks the haunting charm of the angel, it betrays the same illusionistic technique. These characteristics are even more apparent because of the close proximity of a crowned Madonna with the Child attended by an angel (Fig. 2),¹ in a style so different that it is not surprising that the angel's head was at first supposed to be earlier than the crowned Madonna² and a supreme, if unique, example of the Pompeian style lingering at Rome. This explanation, difficult in itself for lack of comparative evidence, became untenable when examination of the layers revealed that the Annunciation had been painted *over* the crowned Madonna; but this discovery did not disconcert the advocates of the persistence in Italy of the Pompeian technique; it supplied them instead with additional proof.³ It was during a study of Professor C. R. Morey's theory of the sources of mediaeval style that the different explanation I am about to offer presented itself.⁴

I shall not repeat in detail the description of the church and its decorations published in the full and careful reports and discussions by Mr. Rushforth,⁵ W. de Grüneisen,⁶ and Monsignor Wilpert.⁷ But it is necessary to have in mind as a basis for this study the few facts known about the church and some of the generally accepted conclusions.⁸

The building, of pagan origin, consisted of an entrance court preceding a peristyle, which opened into three chambers. It was obviously easy to convert these into an atrium, nave, and sanctuary with side chapels. In the end wall of the sanctuary was a square niche, which at an unknown date was replaced by a circular apse, and between the piers of the nave (i.e., the pagan peristyle) was added a choir screen, of which only the lower portions remain (Fig. 6).

¹The head of a saint at the right of the crowned Madonna with the lettering and part of another halo between the two angels belong to a later decoration.

²Even by Diehl, *Manuel d'art byzantin*, p. 330.

³E. g., Raimond van Marle, *La peinture romaine au moyen-âge*, pp. 29, 30-34, 42. (*Italian Schools of Painting*, I, pp. 60, 66-68.)

⁴Professor Morey's views are summarized in his article in *The Art Bulletin*, VII, 2, 1924. To avoid repetition I have taken for granted a general acquaintance with the styles and iconography there discussed. I am much indebted to Professor Morey for suggestions in developing the argument.

⁵G. McN. Rushforth, *The Church of S. Maria Antiqua*, in *Papers of the British School at Rome*, I, 1902. Mr. Rushforth was director of the British School at this time. His report is very reliable though early and without illustrations.

⁶W. de Grüneisen and others, *Ste.-Marie-Antique*,

1911. A great mass of comparative material, well illustrated but unfortunately not conveniently arranged, is combined with important theories and conjectural restorations of frescoes. There are excellent plates, some in color.

⁷Joseph Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten von IV.-XIII. Jahrhundert*, II, pp. 653-726; IV (plates), 1917. In this monumental work Monsignor Wilpert has included the results of his long and painstaking study of the frescoes of S. Marie Antiqua and their different layers and has reproduced nearly every fragment that remains on the wall in an almost unbelievably true color effect. My study in the churches of Rome has been constantly supplemented by these plates, which alone in the present condition of the frescoes have made comparative study possible.

⁸Except in matters of controversy I shall quote from the three authorities above-mentioned without specific references.

While the sanctuary still retained its square niche the church was decorated, and at the right of the niche was placed the scene of the crowned Madonna under an architectural canopy originally consisting of an arch between two gables. The left side of the composition was lost when the square niche was remodelled into an apse, but the cover design of this magazine shows the original scene as restored by Wilpert.

After the construction of the apse the sanctuary was redecorated, and to this second layer of frescoes belongs the Annunciation⁹ with the "Pompeian" angel (Figs. 1 and 2). To this layer belong also the decorative panels below; but the row of church fathers (Figs. 4 and 5) between the dado and the upper scene (Fig. 7) is, according to Wilpert, on a later (third) layer.

This third layer supplies our first clue to a date; for the church fathers carry scrolls the inscriptions of which connect them with the Lateran Council of 649 called by Pope Martin I in protest against the imperial edict which decreed silence in regard to the Monothelite heresy. These figures are less carefully executed than the Annunciation above and Wilpert is probably right in thinking that they were hastily inserted by Pope Martin I to record publicly the orthodox position declared by the council.¹⁰ If so, the third layer must be dated between 649, the date of the consecration of Martin I, and 653, when he was exiled by the emperor for his zealous opposition.

The next layer (fourth) covered the whole sanctuary.¹¹ It included, on the palimpsest wall, a new row of church fathers, one of whose heads is visible at the right of the crowned Madonna (Fig. 2), and above this, a row of four popes, of whom one is labeled St. Martin and another is given a square nimbus (Figs. 16, 17). The latter is identified as John VII (705-707) because in the first reference to S. Maria Antiqua in the *Liber pontificalis* he is recorded as having decorated the church;¹² and this layer is obviously later than that of Pope Martin I (649-53) and earlier than that of Pope Paul I (757-67), who appears in the apse as the donor of the fifth and last layer, representing Christ standing between tetramorphs (Fig. 7).

Outside of these five layers in the sanctuary the frescoes contain only two other clues to dating: in the left chapel (Fig. 9) the square nimbuses and inscriptions connect the decorations with Pope Zacharias (741-52); and in the atrium a scene of Maria Regina attended by saints (Fig. 8) includes a pope with a square nimbus who is identified by a fragmentary inscription as Hadrian I (772-93). There is documentary evidence that the church had been abandoned by the middle of the ninth century, perhaps as a result of the earthquake of 847, since the excavations showed that the walls had been crushed. The atrium, however, continued to be used for a century or more as a burial place and oratory. Our evidence therefore indicates that the second layer containing the Annunciation was earlier than 649 and later than the crowned Madonna, that the decoration of the left chapel was later than that of John VII in the sanctuary, that no painting in the main body of the church can be later than the middle of the ninth century, and that the latest dated fresco is of the end of the eighth century and is in the atrium.

The first step in attempting to solve the problem of the beautiful angel of the second

⁹Restored by Wilpert, *op. cit.*, IV, pl. 207¹, with the Virgin seated. The proportions of the angel should be more slender.

¹⁰This would accord with the zealous spirit he showed in sending letters within a month to bishops far and wide announcing the decrees of the council. (*Liber*

Pontificalis, ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 337, 339, n. 5.)

¹¹With the possible exception of the apse (see p. 137, note 27).

¹²"*Pictura decoravit*" (*Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, I, p. 385).



FIG. 1—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: ANGEL OF THE ANNUNCIATION ON SANCTUARY WALL



FIG. 3 — NAPLES, MUSEUM: PUNISHMENT
OF EROS



FIGS. 4 AND 5—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: CHURCH FATHERS OF MARTIN I



FIG. 6—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: INTERIOR



FIG. 7—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: SANCTUARY WALL SHOWING THE FIVE LAYERS



FIG. 8—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: DECORATIONS OF ATRIUM



FIG. 9—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: DECORATIONS OF LEFT CHAPEL



FIG. 10 — ROME, CATACOMB OF COMMODILLA: VIRGIN ENTHRONED WITH THE WIDOW TURTURA



FIG. 11—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: SCENE ABOVE THE APSE



FIG. 12—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: HEAD OF ST. ANDREW ON LEFT WALL OF SANCTUARY



FIG. 13 — ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: SERAPH ABOVE THE APSE

layer is a study of the scene with the crowned Madonna (Fig. 2). The arresting difference in style between the two layers lies in the lack of all regard in the first for *chiaroscuro*, which is of primary importance in the second, and in the lavish use in the earlier scene of jeweled ornament for decorative effects. The Madonna's elaborate costume consists of two tunics, one with tight and one with flowing sleeves, a purple mantle embroidered with birds in circles surrounded by pearls, and a cape heavy with pearls and cabochon gems. Her jeweled crown is in two layers and at the side of her face her hair is bound back by a jeweled band; from behind falls a light veil. Her left hand holds a folded handkerchief (*mappa*) embroidered with a cross. It is the first example in Christian art of Maria Regina robed in the full regalia of oriental splendor.¹³

The two garments of the Child are of rich material, the outer one adorned with clavi and with an ornamental letter. On His feet are sandals and He holds a jeweled book. The angel approaching on the Virgin's left¹⁴ carries a jeweled crown on veiled hands. On his fringed white garments also are clavi and an embroidered ornament. The lyre-backed throne, covered with double rows of pearls alternating with large cabochons, combines with the jeweled costume of the Virgin to form a brilliant and striking pattern.

The most familiar examples of this use of ornate design are the sixth-century mosaics of Ravenna, and their resemblance to the Madonna scene at S. Maria Antiqua consists not only in their common use of jewels, fringes, and embroideries but in similar details of pose and gesture. The Roman scene is a kind of synopsis of the court costumes of S. Vitale and the frontal Virgin and Child of S. Apollinare Nuovo with angels and saints bearing crowns on covered hands. Although the Virgin's jeweled throne at Ravenna is straight-backed, the throne of our Lord on the opposite wall is lyre-backed with ornament corresponding to that of the Roman scene. The lyre-backed throne appears in the sixth century at St. Demetrius, Thessalonica,¹⁵ and again at S. Agata Maggiore, Ravenna.¹⁶ I have not found it earlier than the sixth century nor elsewhere in Rome at this date;¹⁷ and while jeweled ornament had long been used in Italy, this pattern of

¹³This is shown in the article on Maria Regina by Miss Marion Lawrence (pp. 150 ff. of this magazine).

¹⁴The composition was undoubtedly symmetrical, as the restoration indicates (see the cover design of this magazine).

¹⁵Charles Diehl, *Les monuments chrétiens de Salonique*, p. 1, pls. XXVII, XXXIV, and pp. 97f.

¹⁶The chair on one of the front ciborium columns of St. Mark's may be of the type, but its lines resemble rather the faldstool variety used on the ivory panel of Sts. Peter and Paul in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and on the diptych leaf of St. Paul in the Bargello (R. Garrucci, *Storia dell' arte cristiana*, pl. 498, I; O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, figs. 117, 129). In any case, the two front columns are now quite generally believed to be eastern and of the sixth century (O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, p. 155). It appears also on a reliquary from Grado (Garrucci, *op. cit.*, VI, 436, 5) undated, but in style certainly not earlier than the sixth century. It is found quite often in later Asiatic miniatures: five times in the ninth-century Paris manuscript of the Sermons of St. Gregory Nazianzen (Gr. 510. See Omont, *Facsimilés des miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la bibliothèque nationale du VI^e au XI^e siècle*, pls. XV, XXV, XXXI, LIII, LIX); the Paris manuscript of Nicephorus Botaniates (Omont, pls. LXI, LXIII); a manuscript of St. Gregory Nazianzen at Mt. Athos (A. Michel, *Histoire de l'art*, I, 1, p. 246). It was popular also in the later mediaeval period

at Rome (e. g., apses of S. Maria in Trastevere and S. Maria Maggiore).

The only one of these later thrones, however, that resembles in its swelling curves the one at S. Maria Antiqua is in the twelfth-century apse of S. Francesca Romana, the church formerly known as S. Maria Nuova, to which S. Maria Antiqua was transferred after the abandonment of the old church in the ninth century. The apse decoration in this church, characterized by Professor Morey in his *Lost Mosaics and Frescoes of Rome* as "the strangest of all the mosaics of Rome," has also the crowned Madonna and an arcaded background. It adds to the puzzle to find also the four attendant figures, the hand of God in a wreath, and the bordering inscription, which were apparently added to the Virgin enthroned in the original decoration of the apse at S. Maria Antiqua (see p. 137, note 27). The interval of one hundred years between the loss of the original scene in the apse at S. Maria Antiqua and the first record (in the middle of the ninth century) of the decoration of S. Maria Nuova (by Pope Nicholas I (858-67); see *Lib. Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, II, p. 158) prevents the natural explanation that the old apse composition was repeated in the new church. Possibly the scene was preserved in one of the niches of the atrium.

¹⁷The chair of St. Augustine in a fresco found in the Sancta Sanctorum (Wilpert, *op. cit.*, IV, pl. 140²), cited by Van Marle (*op. cit.*, p. 30; English version, p. 58) is of different type, showing the shape only in profile.

large cabochons alternating with repeated rows of pearls was a favorite decoration at Ravenna.¹⁸ The throne at S. Maria Antiqua, therefore, seems to be a sixth-century form coming to Rome from Ravenna.

In figure style the Roman scene has further points in common with Ravenna, especially with the imperial groups at S. Vitale. The face is broad across the cheeks, with a low brow, heavily lined eyebrows, and a long nose connected by a little line with the bow-shaped upper lip. The contour lines are clear and strong, while light and shade are almost wholly neglected. It is evident that pattern in two dimensions rather than depth of composition has been the aim of the artist.

But with these resemblances there are significant differences. The proportions of the Roman figures are heavier and the eyes more staring. The line is coarse and the drawing of form poor, especially in the hands. With all its wealth of jewels, the scene lacks the studied elegance of the court ladies of Ravenna. It belongs rather with cruder versions like that in the apse of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, a typical example of unassimilated Asiatic influence in sixth-century painting at Rome. If any adumbrations of Hellenistic form still survived, they were becoming more and more feeble under the counter influences from Ravenna and in the inexperienced rendering of local artists. It is an example of this sixth-century Roman painting after it had acquired some of the forms but not the technique of the fashionable Asiatic style that has been preserved to us in the crowned Madonna of S. Maria Antiqua.¹⁹

Its affiliations with sixth-century Roman style are even more apparent, as many critics have observed, when it is compared with the scene of the Virgin Enthroned with the Widow Turtura (Fig. 10) in the Catacomb of Commodilla, dated 528.²⁰ Some of the points of resemblance are more interesting than significant, such as the similar position of the Virgin's hands, the presence of the *mappa* in her left hand, the shape and color of the cushion, and the jeweled ornament of the throne. But besides these, there is close similarity in the proportions of the Child and in some details of form, especially in the figures of the Widow Turtura and the approaching angel at S. Maria Antiqua. The painter in the catacombs, however, was more successful in the Asiatic rendering of the two male saints, and the costume and general effect of the Virgin recall the enthroned Madonna of S. Apollinare Nuovo. But in spite of these qualities, the effect is Roman and it is in its Roman elements, especially in the Widow Turtura and the Child, that its similarity to the scene at S. Maria Antiqua is most evident. Without pressing resemblances too far, the similarity of the crowned Madonna at S. Maria Antiqua to monuments dated in the first half of the sixth century, such as the group with the Widow Turtura, the apse of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, and the Ravenna mosaics, make it difficult to understand Wilpert's date of the fifth century for the earliest layer at S. Maria Antiqua. A date in the sixth century seems assured by the lyre-backed throne and other affinities in ornament and style with the examples cited at Ravenna and Rome.²¹

¹⁸Garrucci, *op. cit.*, IV, 241, 242, 244, 258, 264-67. After the sixth century this form of ornament is widespread.

¹⁹The unmistakable symptom of Asiatic tradition betrays itself in the conch arch behind the Virgin flanked by aediculae. This combination was the characteristic feature of the Asiatic sarcophagi and continues in Asiatic art as a favorite background for figures. Compare its use at the end of the ninth century in an Asiatic miniature of the Paris manuscript (no. 510) of the Ser-

mons of St. Gregory Nazianzen (Omont, *op. cit.*, pl. XXVII). For the full discussion of the Asiatic sarcophagi see C. R. Morey, *The Sarcophagus of Claudia Antonia Sabina and the Asiatic Sarcophagi, Sardis*, V, 1, Princeton University Press, 1924.

²⁰Wilpert, *op. cit.*, IV, pl. 136.

²¹It may be added that the earliest dated inscription that can possibly be connected with the church is of the year 572 (Rushforth, *op. cit.*, p. 108).



FIG. 14—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICA: ADORATION OF THE MAGI ON LEFT WALL OF SANCTUARY



FIG. 15—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICA: VIA CRUCIS ON LEFT WALL OF SANCTUARY



FIGS. 16 AND 17—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: ROW OF POPES ON PALIMPSEST WALL



FIG. 18—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: SAINTS IN CHAPEL OF PHYSICIANS

Whether or not Roman painting in the sixth century was influenced from Ravenna, it is clear that by the seventh century the Asiatic style was as popular at Rome as in Ravenna itself. The great papal decorations like those of S. Agnese and the Lateran chapel of S. Venanzio are Asiatic in conception and betray almost no sign of the old Roman love of form.

It must have been at some time during this period of ascendancy of the Asiatic style at Rome that the square niche in the sanctuary of S. Maria Antiqua was replaced by the apse; but in the repainting which followed, the beautifully modelled figure of the angel had as little in common with the elegant patterns of the great contemporary mosaics as with the sixth-century scene which it replaced. In contrast to their stiff postures and flat forms the angel's head is gently inclined in a natural movement, and in the pointed oval face the bony structure is clearly shown. Shadows define the straight nose and curving roundness of the cheeks; they give expression to the almond-shaped eyes and play about the edges of the lips; and through them the contours pass imperceptibly from plane to plane. The light plays an equal part in giving form to this face, and brings into relief the mantle which outlines the V-shaped opening at the neck. On the shoulder curly locks fall lightly. Behind, a fragment of the wings shows shortened feathers outlining the structure.

The brush strokes which give direction to the shadows of the eyes and define the forms of nostrils and lips are kept within the technique of *chiaroscuro*. The lines of the garment, following the body, disclose a tall and slender figure instinct with movement. These conceptions and this technique are solely Greek, and by their means this fragment remains a vivid embodiment of energy and grace.

It is unnecessary to point out the contrast between this head and those in the scene of the crowned Madonna, for it is in complete opposition to the tendencies and tastes crudely but definitely embodied in the earlier layer. But while its superior draftsmanship differentiates it from local Roman work, it is no less antagonistic to the accomplished products of Asiatic style then in vogue at Rome. From such an environment the production of this angel's head would have been a miracle.

This contrast in style increases in significance when it becomes evident by study of the remaining frescoes of the church that the angel's head is not an isolated phenomenon but rather a specimen of a style the employment or influence of which extends to a great part of the existing decoration and is then as definitely abandoned. This can perhaps be made more clear by examining first the frescoes of the sanctuary, where the layers determine the chronologic sequence. Of the second layer, all that is now visible besides the angel is the fragmentary head of the Virgin Annunciate (Fig. 2). Though this belongs to a fuller and heavier type, its effects of form are achieved by the same means as the more beautiful head of the angel. The same technique of light and shade may be detected in the four church fathers below, in spite of the careless execution and injured condition of this third layer believed to have been inserted by Martin I (Figs. 4 and 5).

The fourth layer (John VII) contains the interesting record of the gradual decline of the style. The mannerisms of copyists appear, an example of which is the "clubfeet" of the three figures at the right, over the inscription, in the Adoration of the Crucified above the apse (Fig. 11). At times the style is strongly affected by the contemporary Roman linear technique.

The scene above the apse is close to the style of the second layer, as may be seen by comparing the angel's head with one of the seraphim (Fig. 13), though in the latter the brush strokes which give direction to the shadows are less subtle. Throughout the groups

there is no hint of frontality. The heads are inclined and the backs curved in the artist's eagerness to express movement.²²

In the two well preserved gospel scenes on the side wall this movement develops into liveliness, especially in the Adoration of the Magi (Fig. 14). Here again are to be seen the curved backs, inclined heads, and well developed muscular action. In the *Via Crucis* (Fig. 15) there is an encroaching tendency to frontality in the group about Christ, but Simon of Cyrene in movement and "clubfoot" is allied to the scene above the apse.

To the same style belongs the fine figure of St. Anne holding the little Virgin (Fig. 19),²³ allowing for differences between the monumental pose and the narrative style. The head of St. Anne, like that of the Virgin in the Adoration of the Magi, conforms to the type of the Virgin of the second layer rather than to that of the angel. There is also an increasing tendency to outline by means of brush strokes, suggested in the seraph's head (Fig. 13), though more marked in the gospel scenes than in St. Anne.

It is obvious, however, that all these scenes, beginning with the Annunciation of the second layer, belong to the technique of light and shade rather than that of line. In spite of differences in skill and varieties of types they show an intimate knowledge of those traditions of movement and grace combined with form which characterize the angel and differentiate it from the stark rigidity of the crowned Madonna. All the inscriptions except those of the gospel scenes are in Greek.

All the other frescoes of the fourth layer reflect an increasing tendency toward a linear technique. They include the row of popes (Figs. 16, 17), fragments of another series of church fathers (Fig. 2), and several heads of saints in medallions. In some of these the lines appear to be overemphasized accents within a technique of form (Fig. 12), but the tendency to rely on line increases and is very evident in the head of the church father on the palimpsest wall (Fig. 2). The popes, in contrast to the figures above the apse, are in the characteristically Roman pose, with heads frontal and the drapery drawn violently to one side by the half-standing, half-walking position. All the inscriptions of this group except the Greek names of the two Greek fathers are in Latin.²⁴

In the fifth layer, the apse decoration of Paul I, no trace remains of the Hellenistic style (Fig. 7). The manner is again that of the crowned Madonna with the changes resulting from the experience of two centuries in Asiatic practice. The Roman feeling for bulk and the big black eyes with rounded contours remain, but the proportions of the figure are elongated and the forms are spread out against a striped background with a more developed interest in pattern. Nevertheless, the general effect is Roman.

For his subject Paul I has returned to the popular Roman apsidal composition, simplifying the scene as it appears at Sts. Cosmas and Damian.²⁵ Our Lord stands with

²²The central figure on the cross is so injured that conclusions as to its style are impossible. From the floor of the church, even with strong glasses, one cannot be sure whether it is bearded or beardless and here even Wilpert fails for he describes the figure as short-bearded (II, p. 671) and shows it exactly as it appears from the floor of the church (IV, pl. 155). Enough remains, however, to indicate that the figure is nude and facing straight forward, like the earliest western representations of the Crucifixion: e. g., the British Museum panel (O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of the Ivory Carvings of the Christian Era in the British Museum*, pl. IV) recently assigned by Professor E. Baldwin Smith to Provence (*Art Studies*, 1924, *A Source of Medieval Style in France*, p. 95, fig. 7); and the doors of S. Sabina (A. Venturi, *Storia dell' arte italiana*, I, p. 333). It differs from the scene in the chapel at old St. Peter's decorated with mosaic by John VII, as recorded in the seventeenth-century drawings of Grimaldi (reproduced by Wilpert, *op. cit.*, I, p. 390, fig.

128, and Grüneisen, *op. cit.*, pl. LXVI) in the important point that the mosaic follows the Asiatic (and in the West, later) iconography of the Rabula Gospel, where Christ is clothed in a colobium. The possibility that the scene was changed to accord with later tastes is somewhat weakened by its resemblance to the composition preserved in the left chapel of S. Maria Antiqua (see p. 139).

²³On the right wall of the sanctuary.

²⁴This use of Greek and Latin in one monument occurs also in the ambo of John VII (see Rushforth, *op. cit.*, p. 90).

²⁵The tetramorphs, which appear here for the first time in a monumental composition at Rome (Wilpert, *op. cit.*, II, p. 702), are perhaps of Asiatic inspiration, as they are found on the ciborium columns of St. Mark's (Ongania, *La Basilica di San Marco in Venezia*, V, pl. Z. I. c.) and in later Cappadocian frescoes (H. Rott, *Kleinasiatische Denkmäler*, pp. 147-48). The combination, though in a less compact form, is found at Bawit

stern gaze holding a book in one hand, the other raised in blessing. At His side a saint²⁶ presents the donor, whose name is inscribed in Latin. The change from a semi-naturalistic to a neutral background is in accordance with the increasing popularity of Asiatic ideas at Rome in the eighth century, and this scene or one like it provided the ninth-century copyist in the apse of the Roman church of S. Marco with his figure of Christ standing on a footstool.

These layers indicate, therefore, an original decoration in the Roman manner of the sixth century, a sudden change to the Hellenistic style, which declined and disappeared in the eighth century when the Roman style returned. The steady decay of Greek form is accompanied by a change from Greek to Latin inscriptions. The inscriptions of Martin I are in Greek; those of John VII are in Greek and Latin; and that of Paul I is in Latin only.²⁷

Changes similar to those in the sanctuary are found also in the rest of the decoration of the church. The Hellenistic style is continued in the groups of saints in the right chapel (Fig. 18)²⁸ and in two scenes on the piers in the nave facing the sanctuary.²⁹ On other sides of these piers are figures of St. Demetrius (Fig. 20) and St. Barbara (Fig. 21) corresponding to the style of St. Anne (Fig. 19). The St. Demetrius is connected also with the once adjoining Annunciation (Fig. 22) (now transferred to the opposite wall) by its pink background, arrangement of the zig-zag folds, and green shadows in the drapery. This Annunciation in turn shows close analogies with the Adoration of the Crucified on the wall above the apse (Fig. 11). There is the same regard for form and bulk, the shadowed eyes, and swaying pose. More distinctive are the rounded contours, the peculiar thrust forward of the head, the "club-foot," and the blue nimbus instead of the more usual dark-bordered yellow form. The tendency to sharpen contours by firm brush strokes allies these also with the two gospel scenes.

The relationship between these two groups was made clearer by the discovery underneath the Annunciation on the pier of an earlier and more beautiful version of the same subject (Fig. 23). Of this, little remains except the lithe figure of the angel, but his lineage is clear. Lightly poised, with the drapery flying back against the firm lines of his body, he is plainly a descendant of Nike.³⁰ Beside him the salutation is written in Greek. It is unfortunate that no facial details remain to sustain the Hellenistic character of this embodiment of movement, but his slender well knit figure, the curving outline of his back, and the little curls in the neck derive from the same concepts which produced the beautiful angel of the sanctuary.

One more scene is important in reconstructing the style introduced into S. Maria Antiqua with the angel of the second layer. The group of the Maccabees, on the opposite pier (Fig. 24), is remarkable not only for the modelling of its figures, their graceful proportions and free movement, but even more for its composition in space, which is managed with an understanding and skill unique in Rome at this period. For it must not be overlooked that this is not a narrative composition but a monumental group. The scene is domi-

(Jean Clédât, *Le monastère et la nécropole de Baouît in Mémoires . . . de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire*, vol. 12, pls. 41 and 42). It is therefore uncertain whether their use in the ninth-century Vatican manuscript of Cosmas Indicopleustes (C. Stornajolo, *Le Miniature della topografia cristiana di Cosmas Indicopleustes*, pl. 48) is a later and Asiatic addition or part of the Alexandrian original.

²⁶Here, according to Wilpert, the Virgin, the titular saint of the church (Wilpert, *op. cit.*, II, p. 702).

²⁷The Greek inscription visible at the right in the apse is part of an earlier layer. It is not clear whether

this belongs to the decoration of John VII or to the original painting of the apse when the second layer was put on the wall at the side. From the exposed section Wilpert has reproduced the heads of St. Peter and an angel on the left (*op. cit.*, IV, pl. 141^a) and reconstructs the scene with Maria Regina enthroned and attended by two angels between Sts. Peter and Paul. Above he has found some indications of a wreath with the hand of God (*ibid.*, II, p. 668).

²⁸Wilpert, *op. cit.*, IV, pls. 145¹ and 165.

²⁹*Ibid.*, pl. 145² and 1.

³⁰Grüneisen, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

nated by the tall, animate form of the mother, who, as proto-martyr, is given the nimbus and the title of saint. Grouped about her, in front and behind, are her seven sons (Fig. 25) and the bearded EΛEAZAP whose stories of martyrdom are told in II Maccabees and elaborated with pitiless detail in the Jewish philosophical homily known as IV Maccabees. The background shows bands of brownish green, light and dark blue, indicating a tradition of naturalistic representation of earth, horizon, and sky.

This interest in landscape background is conspicuous in a fragment on the low screen wall nearby, where, in a flowery field, David stands over the slain body of Goliath (Fig. 26, left). The other scenes in this part of the church and on the right wall, though very ruinous, are full of reminiscences of the Hellenistic technique.

There is reason to believe that the whole church may once have been painted in this style, for it reappears in parts which seem not to have been redecorated, as the narrow side walls of a passage through the nave wall to the ramp (Fig. 27),³¹ and after sporadic instances in the atrium it reappears in the decorations of the Chapel of the Forty Martyrs near the entrance to the church (Fig. 28).

Grüneisen believes that the left chapel (Fig. 9) was originally decorated by John VII, and that the signed decoration of Theodotus in the pontificate of Zacharias (741-52) was repainting in which parts of the earlier decoration were preserved.³² Certainly some explanation is required for the variety of styles in these frescoes, and Grüneisen is probably right in assigning no more to Theodotus than the head of Pope Zacharias and the donor scenes (Figs. 29 and 30). About these there can be no doubt as to the style. They return to that of the crowned Madonna with almost as much abruptness as the change from the first to the second layer in the sanctuary. Even better than the more accomplished scene of Paul I in the apse they show what had been happening in Rome since the earliest frescoes were painted in S. Maria Antiqua. There is still left the stocky forms and the old clumsy drawing, but Asiatic ideals have gained ground and Roman artists have become more accustomed to the substitution of line for form. The figures, isolated and frontal, are disposed against the background with a primary interest in pattern and this is enhanced by the frequent introduction and meticulous rendering of ornament.

These qualities become very apparent by comparing the family group of the donor (Fig. 29) with that of the Maccabees (Fig. 24). In the latter there is naturalistic modelling and drapery with an illusion of movement in space; in the other, a row of frontal figures, with misshapen hands spread out as shapes in the tight contours of the pattern and a little old man and an undersized young woman take the place of the children of the Maccabees. It cannot be held that this is difference of expertness merely; the two scenes result from different ideals. But it is perhaps because of a lurking dislike for the unreality of the elegant patterns of the dominant style that the Roman variety is so constantly crude.

The same coarse drawing characterizes the figure of the kneeling donor in the scene on the entrance wall (Fig. 30), and the contrast with the more expert rendering of the other figures, especially the hand of St. Quiricus, suggests that the figure of the donor was a later addition to the scene.

The best preserved fresco in the church is the well-known Crucifixion in this chapel, and in this the mixture of styles is very evident (Fig. 9). The composition has often been

³¹Wilpert, *op. cit.*, IV, pl. 168¹ and 2.

³²Grüneisen based this on the evident additions to the fresco of the head of Pope Zacharias and of the donor in the row of saints with the dedicatory inscription below the Crucifixion. In the ensuing controversy with Wilpert,

Strzygowski defended Grüneisen's view (*Byz. Zeitschrift*, XV, p. 700) and Wilpert (*op. cit.*, II, p. 692) now admits that the decoration may have been begun a little before the pontificate of Zacharias.



FIG. 19—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: ST. ANNE
WITH THE INFANT VIRGIN ON RIGHT WALL
OF SANCTUARY



FIG. 20—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: ST.
DEMETRIUS ON LEFT INNER PIER



FIG. 21—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: ST.
BARBARA ON RIGHT INNER PIER



FIG. 22—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: THE ANNUNCIATION ON LEFT INNER
PIER (UPPER LAYER)



FIG. 23—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: THE ANNUNCIATION ON LEFT INNER
PIER (EARLIER LAYER)

connected with the Asiatic miniature (Fig. 31) in the Syriac Gospel of Rabula (586 A.D.), but if this or a similar miniature supplied the model for the background and central group,³³ it is apparent that the Roman artist has taken his figures of the Virgin and St. John from another source, not even relating the latter to the figure on the cross. That this source was the frescoes of the church of S. Maria Antiqua itself is suggested by the full-jowled head of the Virgin (of the type on the second layer) and by the now familiar "clubfoot" of St. John. The similarity between this composition and that of the scene in the chapel at St. Peter's decorated by John VII was noted by Rushforth,³⁴ who suggested that the fresco might have been copied from the mosaic. If, however, Grüneisen's conjecture is correct, both scenes were the product of John VII's decorators.

In still a different style are the narrative scenes on the side walls from the lives of St. Julitta and St. Quiricus (Fig. 32), which were perhaps copied from miniatures, since they employ the descriptive labels beginning with "ubi," like the directions to the artist found beneath the flaked-off colors in the miniatures of the Quedlinburg Itala.³⁵ Though the source of the St. Quiricus series is unknown, it is clear from the quality of the line that the technique is not Roman, like that of the donor figures in this chapel, nor does the figure drawing correspond with the lively movement and significant gestures in the small gospel scenes of the sanctuary. The stylistic qualities suggest rather some Asiatic influence such as might have emanated from the Basilian monks of S. Saba on the slopes of the Aventine. Some fragments of their frescoes in that church still remain to show the Asiatic narrative style in mural decoration, accompanied by certain unmistakable motives of Asiatic iconography such as the paralytic being lowered through the roof (Fig. 33). These scenes retain the characteristics of the sixth-century Asiatic miniatures of the Rossano and Sinope Gospels, most convincing in the pose, movement, and gesture of Christ. The descriptive labels are in Greek, beginning with [ἐν φά] ³⁶ The translation of [ἐν φά] into "ubi" is perhaps emblematic of the difference between the pure Asiatic style of S. Saba and its reflection in the St. Quiricus series.³⁷

The frescoes of the left chapel therefore appear to be the work of several hands with different training; but some connection with the painters of John VII is indicated, and there is a sharp return to the Roman manner in the donor scenes of Theodotus.

On the left wall of the nave a series of Old Testament scenes (Fig. 34) displays a style which differs both from the St. Quiricus series and from the gospel scenes in the sanctuary. These also suggest a manuscript source but their version is Roman, as is clear from the round eyes and clumsy proportions, giving the impression of awkward children.³⁸ Their late classical character is more apparent when compared with the competent drawing of the figures of Christ and saints below (Fig. 34). Here we meet for the first time in this church a composition dominated by the Asiatic style, expert in the regularity and symmetry of its patterns and its admirably repeated designs. In contrast to the

³³The inscription EVGAGELISTA, showing ignorant transliteration of the Greek nasal, points to a Roman copyist. Professor Morey (in his article in *The Art Bulletin*, VII, 2, p. 37 n. 3) has noted the similar mistake of Αογγος in the Rabula miniature, indicating that it is itself a copy.

³⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 41.

³⁵V. Schultze, *Die Quedlinburger Itala-miniaturen der königlichen Bibliothek in Berlin*, pl. 3.

³⁶On the derivation of the Asiatic style from Greek art see Professor Morey's article in *The Art Bulletin*, VII, 2, p. 36.

³⁷The action of the soldier in "smashing" St. Quiricus to the ground is the characteristic motive in Professor Smith's Provençal type of the Massacre of the

Innocents (Smith, *Early Christian Iconography and a School of Ivory Carvers in Provence*, p. 241; see also p. 88 of his article in *Art Studies* above referred to (p. 136, note 22). What connection these scenes may have with the Early Christian examples from Provence and with the rediscovery in the second half of the eighth century of the relics of St. Quiricus (St. Cyr) at Auxerre (*Pelits Bollandistes*, 7, p. 74) is still to be explained. Rushforth (*op. cit.*, pp. 44-45) calls attention to the growing intimacy between Rome and the Frankish kings in the time of Pope Zacharias and the journey of his successor to France.

³⁸Cf. the Latin style of the Codex Romanus (reproduced in *The Art Bulletin*, VII, 2, fig. 36).

Latin inscriptions of the Roman narrative scenes above, these inscriptions are in Greek.

The parallel here is close with the eighth-century decoration by the Basilian monks at S. Saba, the figure style of which is preserved in several heads, of which Fig. 35 shows the characteristic truncated oval face, the line formula of the features, and the white woolly hair and beard. These heads and another fragment showing the lower edge of a similar row of standing figures above a dado of painted hangings (Fig. 34) carries the resemblance to S. Maria Antiqua very far. It is a reasonable conjecture that this fine piece of decoration in the nave of S. Maria Antiqua was painted by men trained by the monks of S. Saba.³⁹ In the same style is the well preserved head of St. Abbacyrus in a niche in the atrium.⁴⁰

The latest fresco that can be dated in the church (Fig. 8), the scene in the atrium with Pope Hadrian I (772-93), returns again to the theme of Maria Regina. The figures are stiffly frontal and are spread out in Asiatic style, but there is perhaps a pale reflection of the old traditions in the church for plastic form and flowing line, which give some vitality to the scene.

It appears, therefore, that the changes indicated in the five layers of the sanctuary correspond with the rest of the decorations. They show that after the earliest decorations in the local Roman style of the sixth century, the church was repainted by a group of painters of entirely different training, conceptions, and technique. To their hands may be ascribed, besides the Annunciation of the sanctuary, the earlier of the two Annunciations on the pier in the nave and the group of the Maccabees. This style is Greek, with illusionistic qualities and Greek inscriptions. Painters trained in these traditions continued to work in the church at least as late as the time of John VII and by their side, in the decoration of John VII, were local Roman painters, acquainted with the linear (Asiatic) tradition. By the middle of the eighth century the church had passed back into the hands of Roman painters, some of whom show training by skilled Asiatic artists. The Greek style lingered in a few details and gradually faded out.

If it is admitted that the style of the second layer of frescoes is Greek and an intrusion from outside into the normal development of art in Rome from the sixth to the eighth century, its source must be sought in some still active center of Greek civilization where the traditions and methods of painting were long established and still vigorous. This leads to the East, for the Barbarian invasions in Europe and northwestern Africa had violently interrupted the established Hellenism of the West; and in the East, as Strzygowski has shown, Persian and Mesopotamian influences had prevented the spread of Hellenistic art much beyond the Mediterranean littoral.⁴¹ Our quest, therefore, can be limited to ancient Greek centers established on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, in other words, to the old Hellenic towns and the Hellenistic cities of Antioch and Alexandria.

It would be impossible, with the comparatively small amount of preserved material known to be from these centers, to choose convincingly among them, were it not for the iconography, which provides important clues.⁴² It becomes apparent first of all that some of the iconography in the church is unusual at this time in Italy, which accords with the

³⁹Rushforth, *op. cit.*, p. 32, n. 1.

⁴⁰Wilpert, *op. cit.*, IV, pl. 196^a.

⁴¹Strzygowski, *Origin of Christian Church Art: new facts and principles of research*, tr. by O. M. Dalton and H. J. Braunholtz, 1923. This is the most recent statement of Prof. Strzygowski's theories.

⁴²It would have been a task of years to collect these, except with the help of the Princeton Index of Christian Art, the Early Christian section of which, though not yet complete, now includes so many important publications

that conclusions may be drawn even if some modification should be necessary as new entries are made. I take this opportunity to express my grateful appreciation first of the Index itself and the enormous and exacting work it represents and second of the courtesy of those in charge of it, in transcribing and sending entries to me.

In the classification of material I have followed that of Professor Smith as given in his *Early Christian Iconography and a School of Ivory Carvers in Provence*.



FIG. 24—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: THE MACCABEES ON RIGHT INNER PIER



FIG. 25—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: TWO YOUNGEST SONS OF THE MACCABEES ON RIGHT INNER PIER



FIG. 26—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: DAVID AND GOLIATH (LEFT) AND HEZEKIAH AND THE PROPHET ISAIAH (RIGHT) ON CHOIR SCREEN



FIG. 27—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA:
DESCENT INTO LIMBUS ON RIGHT
SIDE OF PASSAGE TO RAMP

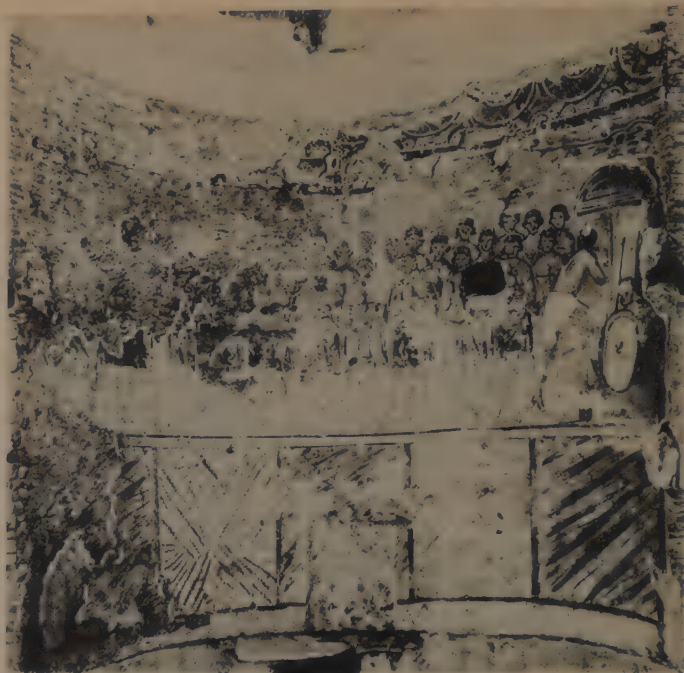


FIG. 28—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: THE FORTY MARTYRS IN
CHAPEL OF THE FORTY MARTYRS



FIG. 29 — ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: DONOR'S FAMILY GROUP ON RIGHT WALL OF LEFT CHAPEL



FIG. 30—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: DONOR KNEELING BEFORE ST. QUIRICUS AND ST. JULITTA ON ENTRANCE WALL OF LEFT CHAPEL



FIG. 31—FLORENCE, BIBL. LAURENZIANA: RABULA GOSPEL. CRUCIFIXION



FIG. 32—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: SCENES FROM LIFE OF ST. QUIRICUS
ON RIGHT WALL OF LEFT CHAPEL



FIG. 33—ROME, S. SABA: HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC

theory that the style also is a stranger in Rome. A very uncommon scene is that of the Maccabees (Fig. 24), though the cult of these proto-martyrs was well established in the early church with fêtes in the East and in Africa and churches known to have been dedicated to them at Antioch and Constantinople.⁴³ Their sufferings formed the topic of numerous homilies by the early fathers, among which the description of St. Gregory Nazianzen outdid the author of IV Maccabees in gruesome details.

The subject does not appear at all in the Early Christian section of the Princeton Index of Christian Art, except in Cabrol's conjectural interpretation of the seven figures in the fire, on the fifth-century Brescia casket, assigned by Strzygowski to Asia Minor.⁴⁴ The interpretation is dubious, first, because the martyrdoms were only partly by fire, but, principally, because the mother is not represented, though the emphasis is so largely on her in Early Christian writing, where she is compared to the Mother of Sorrows. It is, therefore, unnecessary to consider it except to point out the contrast between this realistic treatment of a martyrdom and that at S. Maria Antiqua. The early date of the casket restrains its expression of the didactic purpose which in later Asiatic miniatures developed into such circumstantial renderings as those of the ninth-century manuscript of the sermon by St. Gregory Nazianzen above-mentioned.⁴⁵ In this a full page in nine compartments shows the particular suffering of each of the nine martyrs with a different selection of horrors corresponding neither with the author nor with the apocryphal texts. The contrast between this miniature and the idealistic conception of the scene at S. Maria Antiqua emphasizes the difference not only of date but even more of provenance. The reason for the unpopularity of realistic martyrdoms in the earliest Christian art was because that art was still Hellenistic while the narrative and descriptive character of the Paris miniature is Asiatic. Nothing could be more Greek than the fine idealization of the theme at S. Maria Antiqua.

The source of the story is almost surely Alexandrian, for critics generally accept both II and IV Maccabees as products of Alexandrian philosophy and culture and both books are included in most manuscripts of the Septuagint.⁴⁶ It must be observed, however, that the early church shifted the scene of the martyrdom of the mother and her sons to Antioch (though there is nothing in the texts to indicate any place but Jerusalem) and ascribed IV Maccabees to Josephus. It was, however, one of the ancient fêtes of the Coptic church⁴⁷ and was included in the calendar of the church of Carthage.⁴⁸ Without further evidence, therefore, conclusions as to the provenance of this scene must be drawn from its style and conception.

The Descent into Limbus is rare in art before the ninth century, but it occurs twice in this church, once on the right wall of the passage to the ramp leading to the Palatine and again near the entrance to the Chapel of the Forty Martyrs (Figs. 27 and 36). The theory, based on style, that these frescoes belong to the decoration of John VII is supported by the appearance and similar treatment of the scene in the chapel of John VII in Old St. Peter's.⁴⁹ The only other existing early representation of the scene recorded is on one of the ciborium columns of St. Mark's (sixth century), but Wilpert believes the subject formed part of the earliest decorations at St. Peter's and the Lateran, differing, there-

⁴³Also, according to Martigny, at Lyons (*Dictionnaire des antiquités chrétiennes*, s. v. *Machabées*). The cult was popular in the North in the later Middle Ages and Erasmus says their relics were brought by St. Helen to Byzantium, thence later to Milan, and lastly to Cologne, in 1164. According to Cardinal Rampolla, an inscription formerly in St. Peter-in-Chains records that their relics were placed under the altar in that church by the sixth-century pope, Pelagius. (*Apocrypha*, ed. R. H. Charles, II, p. 671.)

⁴⁴*Kleinasiensien*, p. 213.

⁴⁵Paris, Bibl. Nat., Gr. 510.

⁴⁶*Apocrypha*, ed. Charles, I, pp. vii, viii, 128; II, p. 654. See also articles on the Maccabees in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and in the Jewish and Catholic encyclopedias.

⁴⁷Grüneisen, *op. cit.*, p. 503.

⁴⁸Martigny, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁹As shown in the seventeenth-century drawing of Grimaldi (Wilpert, *op. cit.*, I, p. 390, fig. 128).

fore, from the usual opinion that its origin is eastern. His argument, based on the seventeenth-century sketches of Ciampini and Grimaldi, some stucco restorations, and literary evidence, presents an interesting possibility which, however, awaits confirmation.⁵⁰ Baumstark considers the subject Palestinian, in view of a record of the scene in the Martyrion at Jerusalem.⁵¹ Grüneisen follows Strzygowski in believing in an Egyptian derivation and compares the attitude of Christ to the striding figure of Rameses II as Conqueror from a relief at Abu Simbel.⁵² The resemblance is striking and adds another interesting theory. But, meanwhile, the provenance of the scene remains in doubt.

The *Via Crucis* (Fig. 15) also is not very common at this time, but in this church it was used at least twice, for it obviously formed one of a series on an earlier layer, of which the only recognizable detail is the very unusual one of three crosses being borne to Calvary.⁵³ I know of no other example of the use of this motive.

The cross carried by Simon, instead of by Christ, as in the scene of the sanctuary, occurs on sarcophagi of columnar (that is, Asiatic)⁵⁴ form (two and a doubtful fragment in Gaul and one in the Lateran) and in the mosaic at S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, where it is combined with the Asiatic details of the bearded Christ with broad-banded nimbus; it appears also on the doors of S. Sabina (of uncertain provenance) but with the peculiarity that Simon follows Christ.⁵⁵ This iconography, together with the slight tendency to frontality noted above, implies some Asiatic influence in this scene.

The other gospel scene in the sanctuary, however, the Adoration of the Magi (Fig. 14), clearly belongs to the Alexandrian-Coptic type, having its "chief characteristic . . . the angel, who standing between the Virgin and the first Magus points out the Child to the advancing Wise Men. The Virgin . . . sits in a three-quarters position . . . the Magi are . . . advancing in a line . . . Behind the Virgin's cathedra is Joseph."⁵⁶ In this scene, then, we have a consistent Hellenistic style combined with typical Alexandrian-Coptic iconography.

It is, therefore, significant that the only preserved Nativity in the Church, on the right wall of the nave (Fig. 38), has the peculiarly Alexandrian-Coptic detail of Salome extending her withered arm in supplication to the Virgin. What remains of the rest of the scene accords exactly with the type: "The Christ Child, wrapped like a mummy, lies on a stone or brick crib . . . the Virgin reclines on a mattress."⁵⁷ The only missing details (the ox and the ass above the crib, and Joseph) should appear where the plaster is now also missing. Above the crib is the eight-rayed star, as in the scene on the chair of Maximianus.⁵⁸

Three other scenes may be identified in this sadly destroyed series and of these, two must be included among the still unsolved iconographic problems of this church. Of the two Magi scenes at the right of the Nativity, the first depicts the Wise Men (labeled in Greek) on their way with gifts. The attitude of the youngest Magus suggests some confusion with the Provençal theme of the Appearance of the Star, but the gesture here is not one of pointing but of address. It is one of the early examples of the expansion of the story of the Magi, which became so popular in the later Middle Ages.⁵⁹

⁵⁰Wilpert, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 887ff.

⁵¹*Römische Quartalschrift*, XX, p. 125.

⁵²Grüneisen, *Les caractéristiques de l'art copte*, p. 70, and Strzygowski, *Catalogue . . . du musée du Caire*, *Koptische Kunst*, p. XVIII.

⁵³The earlier scene is on the opposite wall and is entirely lost except for the three crosses. There were apparently two layers earlier than that of John VII, one with scenes divided by one red bar, the other by double red bars. The scene with the three crosses belongs to the series with two bars but it is not clear which of these is

earlier.

⁵⁴Morey, *Sardis*, V, 1, p. 95.

⁵⁵In the Cambridge Gospels Simon follows Christ and assists Him in carrying the cross. See the discussion of this subject by Professor Smith in his article in *Art Studies*, 1924, pp. 97-98.

⁵⁶Smith, *Early Christian Iconography*, pp. 48-49.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁸A. Venturi, *op. cit.*, I, fig. 299.

⁵⁹Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France; XIII century*, pp. 212ff.

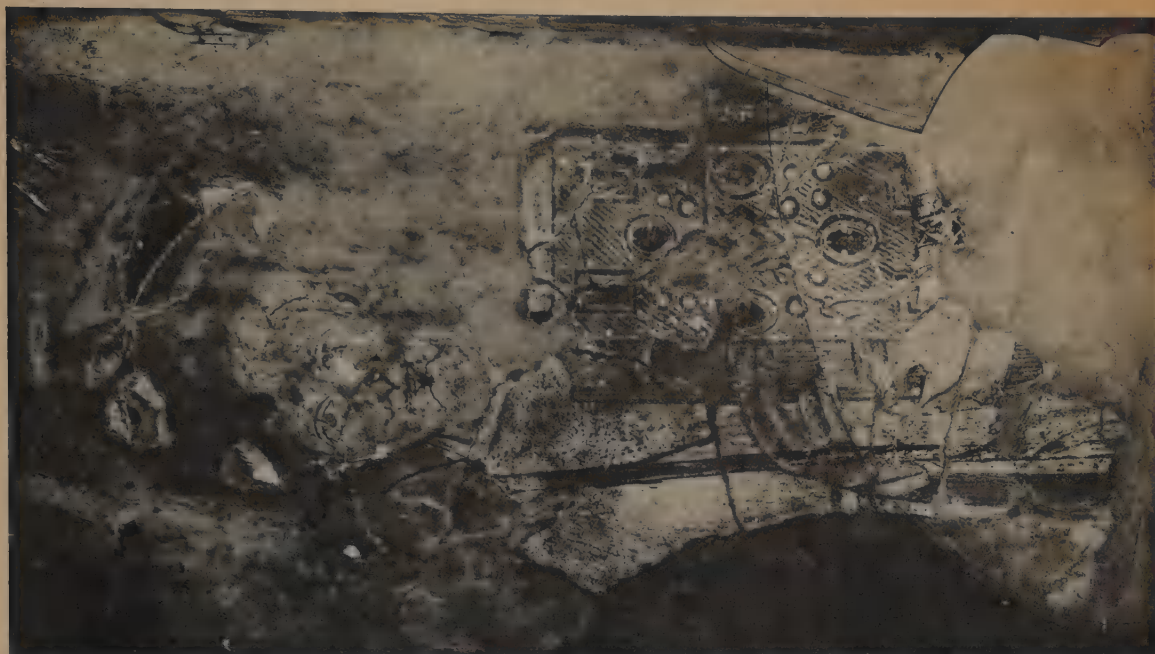


FIG. 35—ROME, S. SABA: ST. LAWRENCE



FIG. 34 — ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: OLD TESTAMENT SCENES; CHRIST WITH SAINTS. S. SABA: LOWER PART OF ROW OF SAINTS



FIG. 36—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: DESCENT INTO LIMBUS ON WALL NEAR ENTRANCE TO CHAPEL OF THE FORTY MARTYRS



FIG. 37—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: THREE HOLY MOTHERS IN NICHE OF RIGHT WALL OF NAVE



FIG. 38—ROME, S. MARIA ANTIQUA: RIGHT WALL OF NAVE

The third scene, directly above the Nativity, represents the meeting of Joachim and Anne, each labeled.⁶⁰ The meager fragments provide no evidence as to whether or not the episode was here localized at the Golden Gate, but in the only other recorded example that is possibly early, the rear columns of the ciborium at St. Mark's, the parents of the Virgin embrace at a later stage of the story.⁶¹ The use of this rare subject, combined with the introduction of the effigy of St. Anne in the sanctuary (Fig. 19) and again in a group with the Virgin and St. Elizabeth (Fig. 37) in a niche of the right wall of the nave, indicates a devotion to the mother of the Virgin quite unexpected in Rome and the West until much later.⁶²

In the group of the Three Holy Mothers the Virgin holds the Christ Child in a mandorla (Fig. 37). This type (Blacherniotissa) seems to be Egyptian, since, except in a seventh-century lead seal at Carthage and on three gold objects of uncertain provenance, it is recorded in the Early Christian section of the Princeton Index only in a fresco at Bawît and in a miniature of Coptic style in the Etschmiadzin Gospels, with possibly one other example among the injured fragments at Deir Abou Hennis (Antinoë).

Another Egyptian practice is the use of the monogrammatic label for the Virgin which is found on a narrow strip of wall on the pier across the aisle above what was perhaps a small altar (Fig. 39). The Egyptian preference for $\text{H}[\alpha\gamma\iota\alpha]\text{Mapia}$ instead of MP $\Theta\Upsilon$ is explained by Monophysite prejudice. Dalton cites its use in the fifth-century Coptic manuscript of the World Chronicle in the Golenishev Collection at Leningrad and again in the church at El Hadra by the Natron lakes.⁶³ The Index records it also in the catacombs of Alexandria and as MAPIA, alone, at Bagawat. In a monogrammatic form similar to that at S. Maria Antiqua it is found twice at Bawît and also on the Trivulzio ivory of the Annunciation, classed by its style with the Alexandrian group.⁶⁴

The Healing of the Blind (Fig. 40) follows Egyptian ivories in showing a single blind man of small stature,⁶⁵ and the seated Virgin in the two Annunciations on the pier adds an Alexandrian-Coptic detail.⁶⁶ If Wilpert has correctly restored the Virgin as seated in the Annunciation of the second layer,⁶⁷ this is a third instance of Alexandrian practice, and here the angel, more true to type, approaches from the right.⁶⁸ Added to these are

⁶⁰Wilpert, *op. cit.*, II, p. 711.

⁶¹Ongania, *op. cit.*, I, p. 282. Professor John Shapley, of New York University, who is now occupied in a study of these columns, says he is "tending toward the opinion that the rear columns, as well as those in front, are early and eastern." See also p. 133, note 16.

⁶²There is some documentary evidence that a basilica dedicated to St. Anne existed in Jerusalem before the Moslem occupation in the seventh century (Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et des liturgie*, 1², s. v. *Anne (Sainte)*). At Constantinople a church was dedicated to this saint by Justinian about 550, and it is generally accepted, though on faulty textual evidence, that Justinian II made a new dedication in her honor (Cabrol, *op. cit.*). H. M. Bannister (*Introduction of the Cultus of St. Anne into the West*, in *English Historical Review*, 18, 1903, pp. 107-112) notes that during the probable date of the consecration Pope Constantine was the guest of the emperor at Constantinople and on his return to Rome in 711 may have brought back relics of the saint and entrusted the painting of her effigy in the sanctuary to "the same artist who had been employed by John VII." While this theory is not supported, in my opinion, by the style of the sanctuary figure, it might explain the appearance of St. Anne in the niche with the three Holy Mothers (Fig. 37). It is to be noted that the name of St. Anne is again associated with that of St. Elizabeth when they head the list of relics conserved at S. Angelo in

Pescheria at the time of its restoration by Theodotus, the donor in the left chapel. It is recorded also that Pope Leo III (795-816) presented to S. Maria ad Praesepe a vestment the embroideries of which included Joachim and Anne (*Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, 2, p. 9). The scenes at S. Maria Antiqua are, however (excluding as eastern the ciborium columns), the first known representations of St. Anne in the West, where the cult remained little known till the later Middle Ages, when it was adopted by French Gothic sculptors and glass painters, especially after the head of St. Anne was brought to Chartres from Constantinople in 1205. The fête was included, however, in no western calendar until 1382, when Richard II of England married Anne of Brittany, and Pope Urban VI ordered its annual celebration. (Cabrol, 1², col. 2165.)

⁶³*Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, p. 674.

⁶⁴A silver ring in the Forrer collection at Strassburg also contains the inscription $\text{H}[\alpha\gamma\iota\alpha]\text{Mapia}$ The Latin form, Maria, is recorded only on five gold glasses and a glass cup in Italy, and in a graffito at St. Maximin, Tarascon.

⁶⁵Smith, *Early Christian Iconography* . . . , pp. 94, 98.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁶⁷*Op. cit.*, IV, pl. 207¹.

⁶⁸Smith, *Early Christian Iconography* . . . , p. 172.

many minor details that are familiar in Egyptian decoration: the equestrian figure recalling, especially in the trappings of the horse, the saints riding down personified vices;⁶⁹ the fragment of Daniel with one of his lions turning backward (Fig. 41), like the scene on the Menas pyxis in the British Museum;⁷⁰ the colors of the garments, their shape and ornament; all these are memory pictures of the monasteries and ateliers of the Nile.⁷¹

In the Hezekiah scene (Fig. 26) the figure standing behind the bed is described by Rushforth, writing in 1902, as "a small beardless figure in white, apparently with a cruciform nimbus and holding what may be a cross-staff."⁷² Wilpert rejects this, interpreting the figure as a short-haired and beardless servant.⁷³ But the official photograph shows plainly the nimbus and the cross staff. If, therefore, Rushforth is further right in seeing a cruciform nimbus in the fragments of lines which certainly are visible above and beside the head, we have in this figure the typically Alexandrian and Coptic short-haired beardless Christ carrying a scepter cross. His appearance in this Old Testament scene is thoroughly in accord with well-known Alexandrian allegorical methods of teaching the harmony between the Old and New Law.

The choice of saints is also noticeably eastern, many of them being unusual in Early Christian art, and the Princeton Index shows that most of them were popular in Egypt.⁷⁴ St. Barbara is not recorded in the first six Christian centuries by the Index; St. Demetrius except in his church at Thessalonica is recorded only at S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, and on a gold ring in the Franks Collection in the British museum; the surprising appearance in the West at this time of St. Anne has been discussed.⁷⁵

St. Elizabeth in the Visitation and other narrative scenes is frequent, but the most detailed cycle of her life is at Deir Abu Hennis (Antinoë). With the Virgin and Child as here, she occurs only in the Golenishev World Chronicle, the miniatures of which are Coptic of the fifth century.

St. John the Baptist, who is introduced at the side of Christ with the Virgin, on the inner left pier opposite the sanctuary, was also popular in Egypt. He appears in a fresco in the Alexandrian catacombs, on the chair of Maximianus, and at the White Convent near Sohag. Except in Egypt and in baptism scenes, he is found elsewhere only on a crown in the cathedral at Monza and in the seventh-century mosaic of S. Venanzio in Rome.

The Alexandrian medical saint, Abbacyrus, is represented four times in the church, twice with his friend and fellow-countryman, John.⁷⁶ In the right chapel, where the preference for medical saints is so marked that Wilpert has called it the Chapel of the Physicians, Sts. Cosmas and Damian are linked with Abbacyrus in two of its three remaining groups, once with and once without John. The only legible names of the third group (Fig. 18) are those of St. Panteleemon, the celebrated physician of Nicomedia, and Dometis, identified as Dometios, the Persian monk and healer martyred under Julian the Apostate.⁷⁷ Of these, Dometios is recorded elsewhere in the Index only at Deir Abu Hennis, where, in an almost ruined group of twelve saints, his name appears next to those of Sts. Cosmas

⁶⁹As St. Sisinnios lancing a demon in the form of a woman (Cabrol, *op. cit.*, s. v. *Baouit*). Cf. the Barberini ivory in the Louvre (Ch. Diehl, *Justinian*, frontispiece). See also O. M. Dalton, *Byz. Art and Archaeology*, p. 211 and n. 2, referring to Strzygowski's article, *Der Koptische Reiterheilige*.

⁷⁰Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, fig. 113.

⁷¹Jean Clédat, *loc. cit.*; J. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara*, 1911.

⁷²*Op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁷³*Op. cit.*, II, p. 695, and IV, pl. 178.

⁷⁴The superior preservation of material in Egypt is

of course recognized.

⁷⁵P. 143 and n. 62.

⁷⁶The cult of these saints was already established in Rome and their shrine at S. Passera on the Via Portuensis was probably early. The circumstances of the translation of their relics to Rome are uncertain (see Morey, *Lost Mosaics and Frescoes of Rome*, pp. 55f.; Armellini, *Le Chiese di Roma*, pp. 179f.; Sinthern in *Röm. Quartalschr.*, XXII, pp. 211f.).

⁷⁷*Anal. Bollandiana*, XIX, pp. 286-317; *Chronicon paschale* (in Migne, *Patrol. graec.*, xcii, col. 745).



FIG. 39—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: VIRGIN WITH MONOGRAM ON RIGHT OUTER PIER (*the monogram has been strengthened in the reproduction*)



FIG. 40 — ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: HEALING OF THE BLIND ON ROUND PIER AT LEFT



FIG. 41—ROME, S. MARIA ANTICUA: DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN



FIG. 42—ROME, VATICAN: JOSHUA ROTULUS. CARRYING THE ARK OVER JORDAN



FIG. 43—PARIS, BIBL. NAT.: MS. GR. 139. PSALTER. PRAYER OF ISAIAH

Among all these, the recurrence of the Alexandrian saints, Abbacyrus and John, is noteworthy. Kelsos was martyred in Egypt.⁸⁰ St. Prokopios is recorded only in a marble fragment from Tinnîs in the Cairo Museum. Sts. Cosmas and Damian are recorded by the Index in four frescoes in Egypt: in the catacombs of Alexandria, at Deir Abou Hennis, at Bawît, and in a Coptic fresco from Wadi Sarga in the British Museum; besides these, the two have as yet been found only at St. Demetrius, Thessalonica; in two Ravennate mosaics;⁸¹ and in their Roman church. St. Stephen is represented at Rome in the mosaic at S. Lorenzo fuori le mura, in a fresco in the Catacomb of Commodilla, and on a silver casket and gold glasses in the Vatican; besides these, he is as yet recorded only in Egypt: in a fresco in the Monastery of the Martyrs near Esneh, and (by name only) in a lost fresco at Deir-el-Dik.⁸²

A comparison of the frescoes with the manuscripts and ivories isolated by Professor Morey as Alexandrian shows that the parallels in iconography are amply supported by similarities in style. The Barberini ivory,⁸⁴ the chair of Maximianus,⁸⁵ the illuminations of the Joshua Rotulus,⁸⁶ and the Paris Psalter (Gr. 139)⁸⁷ abound in figures like those in the three Annunciations, the Maccabees, the Adoration of the Magi, *Via Crucis*, and the scene above the apse in the sanctuary. They show, surprisingly, the same figure style with its dependence on light and shade; the characteristic sweep of line in lively movement; the varied gestures; drapery emphasizing the slenderness and agility of the forms; the suggestions of landscape background (though naturally carried much farther in the manuscripts). Even the mannerisms are found, incipient in the ivories but fully established in the manuscripts: the "clubfoot," the rounded contour of the shoulders; and the peculiar use of three lines to outline the end of nose, mouth, and the indentation of the chin (Figs.

⁷²The full story of the relations of Rome with the East, including Coptic Egypt, is still to be written, but that they were close in the seventh and eighth centuries is now generally accepted. The eighth-century list of relics at S. Angelo in Pescheria already referred to as headed by the names of Sts. Anne and Elizabeth (p. 143, n. 62) includes also: Stephanus, Kelsus, Abbaquirus, Johannes, Dometius, Procopius, Pantaleon, Cosmas,

⁸⁷Omont, *op. cit.*, pls. I-XIV.

1, 11, and 13), which becomes a distinguishing mark of the Rotulus (Fig. 42). The over-emphasis on the outline of one leg under the drapery, as in the figure of Christ in the Healing of the Blind (Fig. 40), is a frequent mannerism of the chair of Maximianus.⁸⁸

The pose of the angel of the earlier Annunciation and of the blind boy on the piers, with leg bent sharply at the knee, is an inheritance from Greek vase painting, going back to Brygos.⁸⁹ The particular form in which it appears on the piers, with one foot pulled up close behind the other, is a common formula in the Alexandrian group for figures in repose, occurring on the Barberini ivory and several times on the chair. Perhaps there is reminiscence of an Alexandrian original of the Vienna Genesis⁹⁰ in the Hezekiah scene, for the king turns his face to the wall with the curious revolving movement of Joseph in the dream scenes.⁹¹

The face of the Virgin of the second layer, fuller around the chin than the angel's, is characteristic of the chair of Maximianus and is noticeable in the two principal figures of the Barberini ivory. It is frequent also in the Joshua Rotulus; but even more common there, as also in the Paris Psalter, are heads like those of the angel. One of these is the head of Moses from the Paris Psalter.⁹² It shows the delicate modelling under the chin, the firm, straight nose, the turn of the head, the shadowed forehead as parts of a common inheritance. The alert figures of the Magi (Fig. 14) are akin to the swiftly moving forms of the Joshua Rotulus (Fig. 42) and there is the same easy swinging gait in the group in the Red Sea scene of the Psalter.⁹² Simon of Cyrene (Fig. 15) forges ahead under his burden like many of Joshua's men (Fig. 42). The mother of the Maccabees (Fig. 24) displays the proportions and fine dignity of the figure of Nux in the Paris Psalter (Fig. 43) though without the freedom of movement belonging to the narrative style of the Psalter. The other Maccabees equally resemble figures of the Psalter and of the Rotulus: there is the same easy inclination of the heads, the soft treatment of the hair, the naturalistic fall of drapery and a common mastery of functional line.

The interest in rendering child forms is no less significant. The youngest of the Maccabees (Fig. 25) like the little figure of Dawn in the Paris Psalter (Fig. 43) goes back to Hellenistic prototypes. The tuft of hair at the side of the forehead of the second youngest of the Maccabees (Fig. 25) is another mannerism, which may be seen also in the head of Dawn (Fig. 43), in the standing Hezekiah,⁹³ and elsewhere in the Psalter.

These parallels have convinced me that there is a large group of scenes in S. Maria Antiqua bound together by style, iconography, and specific mannerisms which ally them with the Alexandrian group of manuscripts and ivories.

These scenes are:⁹⁴

1. The Annunciation of the second layer (Figs. 1 and 2) (Pl. 135) (G. XLIXA).
2. The earlier Annunciation on the pier (Fig. 23) (Pl. 143¹) (G. XIXA).
3. The Maccabees (Figs. 24 and 25) (Pl. 163) (G. XVII).
4. Three Saints (on the right inner pier, facing the sanctuary) (Pl. 145²).
5. Church Fathers of Martin I (Figs. 4 and 5) (Pl. 142).
6. Adoration of the Crucified (scene above the apse) (Fig. 11) (Pl. 155).
7. Second Annunciation on the pier (Fig. 22) (Pl. 144¹) (G. XIX).

⁸⁸*The Art Bulletin*, VII, 2, fig. 19.

⁸⁹From many examples one may select the boy drawn on a vase by Brygos in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (L. D. Caskey, in *American Journal of Archaeology*, XIX, 1915, p. 134, fig. 4).

⁹⁰*The Art Bulletin*, VII, 2, p. 36, n. 4.

⁹¹Von Hartel and Wickhoff, *Die Wiener Genesis*,

pls. 28 and 29.

⁹²*The Art Bulletin*, VII, 2, fig. 27.

⁹³Omout, *op. cit.*, pl. XIV.

⁹⁴In this list, Pl. = colored plates in Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten von IV.-XIII. Jahrhundert*, IV; G = plates in Grüneisen, *Ste.-Marie-Antique*.

8. St. Anne (Fig. 19) (Pls. 159 and 160) (G. Liv; LXIX).
9. St. Demetrius (Fig. 20) (Pl. 144²) (G. XX).
10. St. Barbara (Fig. 21) (Pl. 164³) (G. XVIII).
11. Madonna enthroned between angels (over the Maccabees) (Pl. 166³).
12. Our Lord between the Virgin and St. John the Baptist (Pl. 145³).
13. Saints on entrance wall, Chapel of Physicians (Pl. 145¹).
14. Saints on right wall, Chapel of Physicians (Fig. 18) (Pl. 165) (G. LVI).
15. Forty Martyrs, Chapel of Forty Martyrs (Fig. 28) (Pl. 199).
16. Popes (John VII) (Figs. 16 and 17) (Pl. 154).
17. Church Fathers (John VII) (Fig. 2) (Pl. 133).
18. Adoration of the Magi (Fig. 14), (Pl. 161²).
19. *Via Crucis* (Fig. 15) (Pl. 162).
20. Medallions with heads of apostles (Fig. 12) (Pls. 157 and 158).
21. David and Goliath (Fig. 26) (Pl. 178).
22. Hezekiah (Fig. 26) (Pl. 178) (G. LV).
23. Judith and Holofernes (Pl. 161¹).
24. Equestrian figure (Pl. 178) (G. XVI).
25. Fragment (Pl. 178).
26. Healing of Blind Man (Fig. 40) (Pl. 164¹).
27. Madonna and Child with saints and angels (passage to ramp) (Pl. 168¹).
28. Limbus, passage to ramp (Fig. 27) (Pl. 168²).
29. Limbus, near entrance to Chapel of Forty Martyrs (Fig. 36) (Pl. 167¹).
30. Saints in niche, Chapel of Physicians (Pl. 145⁴).
31. Nativity and other gospel scenes on right wall of nave (Fig. 38) (Pl. 194).
32. Three Holy Mothers (Fig. 37) (Pl. 194).
33. Virgin with monogram (Fig. 39) (Pl. 196²).
34. Daniel (Fig. 41) (Pl. 146²).
35. The Three Children in the Furnace (Pl. 146¹).

The résumé of the study of style⁹⁵ indicated that there were three degrees in the purity of the Greek tradition: 1, the pure Greek style, introduced by Alexandrian artists; 2, the derivative Greek style, by painters trained by the Alexandrians; 3, the mixture with elements from local Roman painting. According to this analysis, scenes 1-5 (from the list above) belong to the first group; scenes 6-15, to the second; and scenes 16-35, to the third.⁹⁶

The first two groups are closely connected by style and all the inscriptions are in

⁹⁵P. 140.

⁹⁶The classification above agrees in the main with the usually accepted dating. The important differences are in the St. Demetrius and the Maccabees. Wilpert associates the St. Demetrius with the first instead of the second Annunciation on the pier because of the use in both of short lines under the last letter of the inscription, but this slender criterion will certainly not hold in view of the frequent use of such lines in manuscripts.

He assigns the Maccabees to the decoration of John VII mainly because of a supposed similarity of the lettering in the labels of the Maccabees to that on the ambo of John VII (Grüneisen, *op. cit.*, pp. 55, 84). Wilpert also sees a resemblance between the letters YΠΙ in the border of the scene of the Maccabees and those on the under layer of the apse (II, p. 680). But on p. 669 he suggests the possibility (from the character of these letters) that the under layer may belong to the period of Martin I.

The style of the scene above the apse implies an

earlier date than that of John VII, but I have accepted the general opinion that it is on the same layer as the row of popes below. It may be observed, however, that the iconography of the Crucified seems earlier than that of the eighth-century representation in the left chapel and than that in the sketch of John VII's mosaic at St. Peter's; and Professor Kirsopp Lake, of Harvard, finds nothing in the lettering of the scene to prevent its being as early as the middle of the seventh century. It may, therefore, be pointed out that the pope with square nimbus on the palimpsest wall is not surely John VII though he must be later than Martin I. H. M. Bannister, remarked in 1903 (*op. cit.*, p. 112, n. 13) that the record that John VII *pictura decoravit* is not inconsistent with his having begun in his short reign a decoration that was continued by his successors. While this is quite possible it seems even more likely that he continued a decoration which had been going on in the church for a long period, and that it included possibly the left chapel.

Greek. In the second group, headed by the Adoration of the Crucified (scene 6), the pose of the figures is less free, and mannerisms like the "clubfoot" appear. In some figures the drapery is stiff and lines are used to indicate folds. The mannerisms and other signs of disintegration correspond to a similar trend in the Alexandrian group of ivories and manuscripts.

The scenes of the third group are bound to the Alexandrian tradition either by the retention of the technique of light and shade or by iconography or both, but the labels are usually in Latin. Some of the scenes, as the Adoration of the Magi (scene 18), are very close to the Alexandrian group in both iconography and style, but the Latin labels and some coarse drawing betray the local Roman hand. In the medallions with the heads of the apostles (scene 20) line treatment has been applied to the modelling, producing a curious and not ineffective combination. In the group of saints in the niche of the Chapel of Physicians (scene 30) a marked intrusion of the linear style is combined with Greek inscriptions, but the lettering differs from that in the two other groups in the chapel (scenes 13 and 14) and seems like a copy. As the niche which these figures decorate was not part of the original building, it is possible that this group was transferred from an earlier series destroyed by the reconstruction.⁹⁷

This retention of Greek labels, together with illusionistic technique and Egyptian iconography, through a long series of frescoes in which the deterioration of the style and intrusion of other influences can be detected, indicates the existence in the church of a body of Alexandrian workmen, who trained assistants, who in turn trained others. Although, unhappily, nearly all the work of the original group is lost, the angel of the sanctuary (scene 1) remains to demonstrate its Hellenistic charm. The whole of the middle and right side of the church was painted by them or their followers, and indications that their work extended to the whole church have been pointed out.⁹⁸ The earliest paintings in the left chapel contain some echoes of their style,⁹⁹ as in the strongly Roman scene of the Crucifixion (Fig. 9), where it may be noted farther that the Virgin's title (Maria) points to Egyptian terminology. Even in the Asiatic rendering of the scenes from the life of St. Quiricus there is a definite indication of Alexandrian tradition in the "flying fold" (Fig. 32); and the completely Roman version of the Old Testament scenes on the left wall of the nave retains the Alexandrian forked stake in place of the gallows in the Joseph scene at the extreme right (Fig. 34). The pale reflection of the style in the scene in the atrium with Pope Hadrian I (Fig. 8) continues to use the old Egyptian title of Maria for the Virgin.

Whether this well established group of artists also decorated with mosaic John VII's chapel at Old St. Peter's cannot be determined from restored fragments, but the Grimaldi drawings preserve many details of Alexandrian iconography and show similarities to the frescoes at S. Maria Antiqua. Our knowledge of early decorations in Rome is also insufficient to show whether these artists worked in other churches, but some fragments in the lower church of S. Maria in Via Lata¹⁰⁰ suggest that this church may also have had some work by the gifted strangers. It might be expected that such a body of painters would be occupied in illuminating manuscripts, especially for the large and prosperous Greek colony at Rome. And here the possibility presents itself that the remarkable resemblances to the miniatures of the Paris Psalter and the Joshua Rotulus are to be explained by the production of these miniatures in this Alexandrian atelier.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷It may be noted (though I am not prepared to draw conclusions) that in the most purely Greek of the three groups of saints in the right chapel (scene 13) the labels are vertical; in the next group (scene 14) the labels are vertical and horizontal; and in the group which shows most clearly the encroachments of the local style the

labels are horizontal.

⁹⁸P. 138.

⁹⁹P. 139.

¹⁰⁰Wilpert, *op. cit.*, IV, pl. 177¹ and 2.

¹⁰¹Against this theory is the fact that the Paris Psalter was bought in Constantinople by the French

The date of the arrival in Rome of these painters can be conjectured from the evidence of the frescoes. If the crowned Madonna was painted in the sixth century, it seems reasonable to assume a date in the first half of the seventh century for the Alexandrian Annunciation since it must be earlier than the layer of church fathers inserted, according to Wilpert, about 650. It was just at this time that life in Alexandria and its neighboring monasteries became most precarious, owing to "the hurricanes of conquest which swept over Egypt during the first half of the seventh century."¹⁰² The Persian invasion and the siege and capture of Alexandria in 617 were accompanied by fierce depredations, especially among the neighboring monasteries. Peace was scarcely established before the menace of the Moslem hordes again threatened those centers of artistic production and the Arab conquest of Alexandria about 641 brought to an end the long established Alexandrian leadership in Christian art.

The records of the time allude to the flight of individuals before these invasions,¹⁰³ and in the terms of the surrender of the city to the Arabs it was specified that the inhabitants might leave with their movable possessions. It is hardly to be doubted that some of these fugitives found their way to Rome and with them their books, for love of which the Alexandrians were so well known.

John Moschus, the Syrian, writing of his travels in Egypt in the early years of the seventh century, pleasantly mentions Zoilus the Reader, who was also an illuminator.¹⁰⁴ It was perhaps a group of such artist monks, fleeing from their devastated monasteries, or perhaps only a father and son from Alexandria itself, who found their way to Rome in the seventh century and left in the little church of S. Maria Antiqua the proofs of their Hellenistic inheritance. That their decoration was beautiful we know from the angel and that it must have been extensive and impressive is indicated by its long influence in this church.

The Alexandrian style, however, did not take root in Rome. Not the beautiful angel of the palimpsest wall but the apse of Paul I survived in the wide-spread Italo-Asiatic style of the early Middle Ages.

ambassador in 1557-59, and that there is thirteenth-century Greek writing on the back of the Joshua Rotulus, indicating that it was in Greek hands in that century. Nothing, however, in the history of mediaeval manuscripts is better established than their numerous and distant journeys. If an occasion for the presentation of such volumes in Constantinople needs to be suggested, it might have been the visit already mentioned (p. 143, n. 62) of Pope Constantine to Justinian II at the close of the first decade of the eighth century.

The miniatures of the Paris Psalter not only show the marked similarities to the Alexandrian frescoes which have been pointed out (pp. 33-34) but there are even traces of the "hands" described by Professor Morey (in his article, *The Art Bulletin*, VII, 2, p. 42, n. 1). Among these, hand A and the painter of the Exaltation of David would correspond with the first two Alexandrian groups (p. 37); hand B and the painter of the Penitence of David, to the third group (scenes 16-34). To the mannerisms noted as frequent both in miniatures and frescoes may be added the curiously ruffled fold on the leg of Christ in Limbus (Fig. 36), which recurs in the drapery of the kneeling David (Omont, *op. cit.*, pl. VIII). Hand D is the painter who had Asiatic leanings and a similar manner might be detected in the left chapel, especially in the swollen faces of the St. Quiricus series. D's favorite rinceau motive also reappears, here adorning the garment of Longinus (Fig. 9); and it is at least a coincidence that the irregular design of the rinceau used by D over the city gate in the Jonah scene of the Psalter is repeated in the fresco on the garment (except that space was lacking for the last curl). There is nothing in the Alexandrian

style at S. Maria Antiqua quite as debased as that of hand C, but some elements of its degeneracy may be recognized in the dislocated form of Stephon in the left chapel (Fig. 9) and in the coarse drawing of the Virgin with the monogrammatic label (Fig. 39).

Professor Lake sees nothing in the writing on the miniatures to forbid this theory. Furthermore, he considers that the writing in the upper left corner of the miniature of Anna the Mother of Samuel (*The Art Bulletin*, VII, 2, fig. 29) is "far more likely to be of the eighth century than later." In this opinion Professors C. B. Gulick and R. P. Blake, of Harvard, and Professor Alexander Vasilieff, of Wisconsin, concur.

Some connection between the Paris Psalter and the Joshua Roll is indicated by the Vatican Bible of Leo the Patrician (Vat. Reg. Gr. I) the 18 miniatures of which include (together with folios in Asiatic style) scenes from both the Joshua Roll and the Paris Psalter. The latter scenes closely resemble the Roll and the Psalter in style also, but a few differences in composition suggest that the copyists had access to more than one original. No conclusions, however, can be drawn without further study of the miniatures in Paris and Rome.

¹⁰²A. J. Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 1902, p. 96.

¹⁰³Among those who fled before the Persian invasion were Nicetas, the governor, and the Melkite archbishop, John the Almoner.

¹⁰⁴A. J. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 98. John Moschus fled from Alexandria before the Persian invasion and ultimately reached Rome, where he died after finishing his book.

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